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CIA Seeks Exemption From Privacy Measure

WASHINGTON — The Central Intelligence Agency's efforts to remain totally exempt from a "right to privacy" bill before the Senate has focused attention on how much power an intelligence agency has over its staff. The bill is now before the House, having just passed the Senate 79 to 4.

A bill sponsored by Sen. Sam J. Ervin, D-N.C., chairman of the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, would protect federal employees from the wholesale use of lie detectors and unwarranted governmental invasions of privacy. But when it comes to the CIA, the question arises how can a bill of rights for federal employees be reconciled with the necessities of national security.

A paragraph in the Ervin bill now already gives CIA directors and the National Security Agency—its counterpart in the Defense Department — authority to use polygraph tests in individual cases or to question applicants regarding their financial assets. But the CIA sought a secret hearing before the Judiciary Committee to support its wish to be totally exempt from the provisions of the bill. This would bar applicants and employees from recourse to appeals procedures whenever they thought their constitutional procedures were being violated.

Obviously, the character and vulnerabilities of CIA applicants are of utmost concern to the agency. Employees have access to sensitive material on which the survival of the nation depends. We know that there is a constant effort to seduce or blackmail employees by foreign powers. Thus, questions concerning drinking habits or sexual deviations are certainly relevant. Obviously, an intelligence agency exactly as a police department requires contacts inside undesirable and opposing groups. But such individuals need not be direct employees. A system exists just for this situation. Staff members known as "cut-outs," whose connections are not known on the outside, make the necessary personal contacts, using any cover story that fits. There is no need to put such undesirables inside the organization.

WHAT DISTURBS Senator Ervin is that the agency is asking applicants questions

which are only remotely related to its security mission. Secretaries are quizzed regarding their love for their mothers or their belief in God. They are even asked about their bathroom habits and the subject matter of their dreams. Apparently, every free wheeling psychiatrist has unlimited power to satisfy his own version of what must be told by a young girl or a newly wed young male. Applicants on college campuses are being cross-examined on such matters as "when was the first time you had intercourse with your wife?"

According to Senator Ervin we are losing the talents of many qualified people who would otherwise choose to serve their government because applicants consider such questions degrading. Ervin, who incidentally is friendly to CIA, said in a recent speech, "The idea that any government agency is entitled to the 'whole man' and knowledge and control of all the details of his personal and community life unrelated to his employment or to law enforcement is more appropriate for totalitarian countries than for a society of freedom."

This sort of concern is being voiced by legislators such as Sen. Roman Hruska, R-Neb., who like Ervin is friendly to CIA and who opposed efforts to set up a so-called watchdog committee to further supervise it. Senator Hruska, a member of the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, declared:

"I have great faith in them (the CIA) and I have great faith in their ability to accomplish their mission. But at the same time, they cannot be permitted to use methods that will trample upon the constitutional rights of their employees or applicants for employment. The record shows they have used such employment practices."

REQUIRED DONATIONS of time and money that have been made obligatory by the Orwellian use of the word "voluntary" is an example of what would be barred under the Ervin bill. Many members of Congress have secretly received complaints regarding this from federal employees who would be fired if their names became known.

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